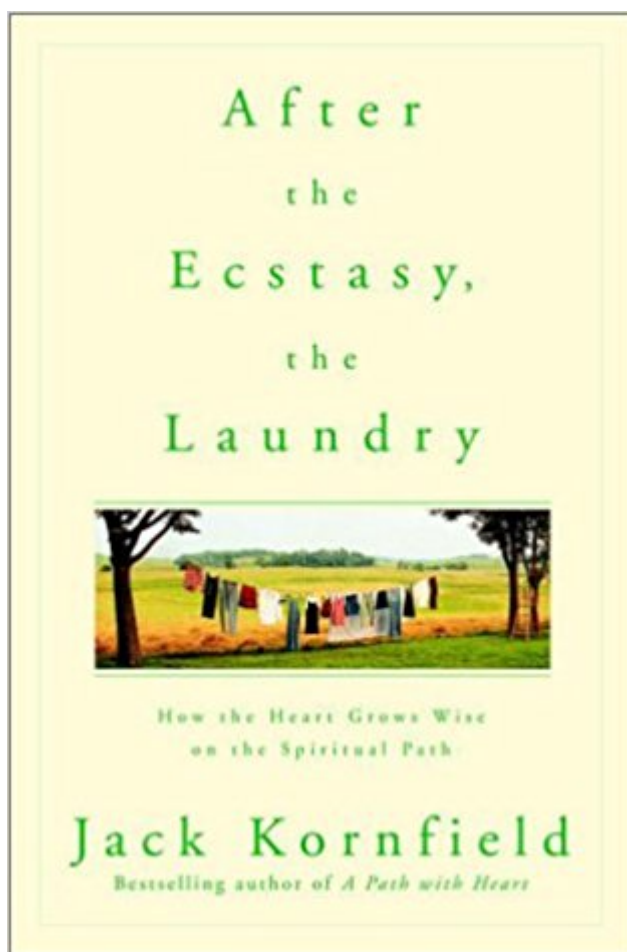


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After The Ecstasy, The Laundry: How The Heart Grows Wise On The Spiritual Path



Synopsis

“Enlightenment does exist,” internationally renowned author and meditation master Jack Kornfield assures us. “Unbounded freedom and joy, oneness with the divine ... these experiences are more common than you know, and not far away.” But even after achieving such realization • after the ecstasy • we are faced with the day-to-day task of translating that freedom into our imperfect lives. We are faced with the laundry. Drawing on the experiences and insights of leaders and practitioners within the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Sufi traditions, this book offers a uniquely intimate and honest understanding of how the modern spiritual journey unfolds • and how we can prepare our hearts for awakening. Through moving personal stories and traditional tales, we learn how the enlightened heart navigates the real world of family relationships, emotional pain, earning a living, sickness, loss, and death. Filled with “the laughter of the wise,” alive with compassion, After the Ecstasy, the Laundry is a gift to anyone who is seeking peace, wholeness, and inner happiness. It is sure to take its place next to A Path with Heart as a spiritual classic for our time.

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Customer Reviews

Jack Kornfield, one of America's most beloved teachers of meditation, assures us that enlightenment does occur on the spiritual path but warns that it is not the end of the road. Bringing his thoughts to a personal level, Kornfield looks up many of the notable spiritual teachers of our times (Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Sufi, etc.) and presents extended quotations of their trials and

epiphanies. These anecdotes are woven together with fables and ruminations from Kornfield's own decades-long experience as a practitioner and teacher, creating an image of the spiritual life as challenging, multidimensional, rewarding, and, yes, mundane. In the old days in China, Zen monks were encouraged to travel for instruction under a variety of masters. Here, Kornfield introduces us to today's masters, but off their podiums, as equals. Genuine experiences of awakening, despair, fault, serious transgression, and simple childlike joy all appear as bridges on the way to the divine. After the Ecstasy, the Laundry is not just another inspirational bestseller, it is a lasting record of concrete insights forged from the fires of dedicated practice. --Brian Bruya --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What to do after one has achieved enlightenmentAor a flash of it? How do the problems of everyday life look different? Which, if any, go away? And what is it like to have lived for decades under a spiritual discipline? Kornfield (A Path with Heart, Teachings of the Buddha, etc.) devotes his latest volume of advice and meditation to such questions. Kornfield has been a teacher in the Theravada Buddhist tradition since the mid-1970s; he also holds a degree in clinical psychology. His methods and counsels here reflect Buddhist teachings, but he also tries hard to be ecumenical: Kornfield interviewed lamas, Buddhist elders and Zen teachers, but also Sufi masters, rabbis and Catholic nuns and monks. Anecdotes and quotations draw on Hindu mythology, medieval Christian theologians, Native American visionary traditions and even decidedly secular modern writers (e.g., Albert Camus and Sharon Olds). Bits of interviews alternate with Kornfield's own interpretations and with anecdotes and lessons drawn from sacred Scripture, anthropology and current events. A chapter about circumstantial hardships jumps from postwar Japan to America's overcrowded prisons; a noteworthy chapter on self-esteem and self-abasement vaults from William Blake to The Tassajara Bread Book. Kornfield wants to help readers attain "a welcoming spirit, to greet all that life presents to us with a wise, respectful and kindly heart." Some may find Kornfield's words vague, or self-evident: "Spiritual life involves a maturing of understanding, a continual unfolding, wherever we are." Even unsympathetic browsers, though, might enjoy the compressed life stories of the many interviewees. And the audience Kornfield envisions may well want and use his admittedly general counsel that "no matter how isolated or embattled our lives, we need one another as family, we need each other's hearts and songs to help one another find the way." That's hardly news, but isn't it the truth? (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What a catchy title for such a meaningful book! It is all about what comes after the good stuff which is appreciated and cherished but not the end in the overall journey

This book is a real treasure. Having recently experienced a real mountaintop experience, I was so glad to have the wonderful wisdom and tender guidance of this book to help me through the returning to the world. This is not just a book of opinions by a smart guy. It is a compendium of wisdom and varied perspectives on some very important aspects of living a spirit-led life. The author has effectively drawn on the experiences of a diverse set of individuals with long experience in both their own lives and in the guidance of those of us who are just beginning. This book helped me to understand my experience and to place it in a realistic perspective and that allowed me to retain the treasure of my experience without the sense of loss that is usually attendant to the conclusion of an interval like this. I highly recommend this book. It is one I turn to weekly to reread some of the incredible wisdom and insight conveyed in a brilliant organization. This jewel get my highest recommendation.

Jack Kornfield has interviewed American mystics of all stripes--Jews, Christians, Hindus, and especially Buddhists from a variety of traditions, and this book provides great insight into what it means to have been engaged in sincere spiritual practice for several decades as an American. One of the great insights that emerges is that which Ken Wilbur recently came to (in his book *Integral Spirituality*), that mystical insight is real and powerful, but it does not by itself lead to maturity or even a high standard of ethical behavior. Well-intentioned teachers still find themselves challenged by sexuality, power, and money, among other issues. The book is, not surprisingly, more oriented towards Buddhists than mystics of other stripes, but it is the best real-world description of how the path is experienced by Americans after many years of practice that I have found.

this book has been my guiding star for months now, as i try to sort through a major spiritual shift in my life, and what to do with it now. seems like whenever i'm really puzzling over a question, i open the book, and there it is, exactly what's been on my mind -- as though the author's following me around, peering into my head. it's uncanny!! using anecdotal experiences of people of many faiths, in many countries, kornfield shows us how difficult it can be to apply our spiritual learning to our daily lives, whether we live at home with an ailing parent, or in community in a religious setting. then he helps us to bridge that gap, to apply our ecstasy to our mundane existence, our work, our family relationships. his stories are brief, concise, humorous, and always enlightening. he does not blather

on and on. he has great compassion for all our human foibles, and isn't afraid to share a few of his own. i strongly recommend this book to ANYONE who has a spiritual life, in any faith. you'll love it!!

I have read some reviews which highlight the perceived 'New Age' undertones of this book. I noticed this and also appreciate those comments but I do not feel it detracts from the experience of the book. Jack is obviously well versed on Spiritual Philosophy and his own insights were well received. As a western practitioner of eastern spiritual modality, I genuinely took great value from other 'Westerners' own experiences on their own journeys. Especially of a craft based in Eastern spiritual thought and how someone from developed European nations interpret and relate this thought into the context of their own world. A found this a valuable insight into the spiritual journey in a context I could relate to. Three bows to Jack Kornfield.

What is enlightenment? Every single moment is enlightenment if only we are open to it, says the author in the introduction. So true. It's like when you buy a new car, say a Buick Regal, and suddenly you see Buick Regals everywhere. Every time you get on the highway, there's another Buick, just like yours! Now, why is that and why didn't you ever see them before? It's because you're AWARE of that particular car now. So to be aware of life, in all of it's gory and glorious detail, we must SEE, open our eyes. We must be awake and present which is easier said than done. I know I find myself living in every time zone but the present one more often than not. We're usually thinking of tomorrow or yesterday and seldom appreciate the here and now. This book is a wonderful guide for learning to be present, to meditate and to awaken to the present moment.

This book was recommended to me at a critical moment on my spiritual path and I am grateful to have followed up on the suggestion. Kornfield addresses many key issues that inevitably accompany the process of awakening to one's higher self, and he offers great insight on how to navigate this journey with greater confidence and compassion for oneself. It is one of my to-go-to books, knowing that opening it on any page will be a pleasurable and insightful read.

This book is about spiritual people still having to face every day realities. Excellent book! Helped me to know that I am not alone in having to face life's challenges and that it is okay not to be perfect. I realized that NOBODY lives a perfect life. It is all part of growth and life is beautiful just as it is.

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